

## EPIDURAL THERMAL POSTERIOR ANNULOPLASTY

### ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5                   An apparatus for thermally treating intervertebral discs includes an energy application head having an energy application region and a tissue protecting region. A control member operationally connected to the energy application head preferably controls the energy application head during treatment. Significantly, the energy application head is preferably wedge-shaped  
10 and has a thin insertion edge sloped to a thick region for lifting vulnerable tissues away from a site of energy application to the at least one intervertebral disc. Preferably, the energy application head has a smooth surface suitable for gliding over surfaces of an annulus fibrosis without snagging other tissues. The present invention also includes a method for thermally treating an intervertebral disc.

15